

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claims 1 - 5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently amended): A process for producing a natural cheese, ~~and the process which~~ comprises:

(1) adding a lactic acid bacteria starter to a milk component;

(2) forming a curd from the milk component mixed with the lactic acid bacteria starter;

(3) processing thus formed curd to remove whey; and

(4) forming pressed pieces of the curd.

wherein the process further comprises

adding an yeast extract to a the milk component before formation of a the curd in step (2); and

fermenting-incubating the curd obtained in the above (4), at 20 to 35°C for 16 to 26 hours, to produce the natural cheese,

wherein the lactic acid bacteria starter comprises a lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori*; and

wherein the natural cheese comprises a the lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori*, wherein the

~~lactic acid bacterium in the number of is present at~~ a viable count of  $10^7$  cfu/g or more when preserved at a temperature of 10°C or less for 6 months.

7. (original): The process according to claim 6, wherein the curd is incubated without being cooled after molding and pressing.

8. (canceled):

9. (currently amended): The process according to ~~any one of claims claim 6,~~ wherein ~~thea~~ lactic acid ~~bacteria~~ starter is a mixture of the lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori* ~~and another strain of lactic acid bacterium is added to raw milk as a starter.~~

10. (currently amended): The process according to ~~any one of claims claim 6,~~ wherein the lactic acid bacterium is *Lactobacillus gasseri* OLL 2716 (FERM BP-6999) or a mutant thereof.